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**To:** Microsoft ATR  
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**Subject:** Regarding the Settlement

As a consumer, I think the most powerful weapon Microsoft wields over its competitors is not the applications or even the operating system, but its proprietary file formats for Word, Excel, Media Player, and now even Internet Explorer data. No other application or middleware developer can compete fairly because of the fearful nature of most users, afraid to use other software that may create files unreadable or, worse yet, corrupted, when delivered to others with Microsoft applications.

That's why I believe MS, as a proven monopoly, should be forced to publish its file formats so that others can offer competing apps to edit or even create similar documents. The fact that MS Office used to cost a small fraction of what a computer did, compared to today, when it commands half the price of the hardware, is an example of where the lack of competition has hurt consumers in the wallet.

We're forced to use Microsoft software not by choice, but by necessity. If the government sees fit to allow MS to continue as a sanctioned operating system monopoly, we should at least be allowed to use less expensive application software in Windows to create documents and communications.

Thanks for your time.